United Nations ST/IC/2007/21

Secretariat

15 June 2007

Information circular*

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: **2007 competitive examination for Arabic-language translators**

1. The purpose of the present information circular is to invite applications from staff members of the Secretariat at the P-3 level and below who wish to take the competitive examination for Arabic translators in 2007, in accordance with the provisions of administrative instruction ST/AI/1998/7 of 23 March 1998.

2. The competitive examination for Arabic-language translators will be held, tentatively, on 12 November 2007 in New York, Geneva, Vienna, a number of Arabic-speaking countries and other locations according to the number and location of qualified candidates convoked for the examination. The purpose of this examination is to establish a roster from which present and future vacancies for Arabic-language translators will be filled. When vacancies occur in the translation service, successful candidates will be recruited from the roster, subject to the requirements of the service in terms of expertise and language combinations.

3. The examination is open to staff members of the United Nations at the P-3 level and below who meet the eligibility requirements and to qualified external candidates. Staff members of subsidiary organs of the United Nations and staff members whose service is limited to a particular organ, fund or programme of the United Nations or to a special mission are considered external candidates for the purpose of this examination. Such candidates, if successful, will be offered a new appointment with the United Nations, subject to normal United Nations recruitment procedures and standards. Staff members who are successful in the examination and are selected for inclusion in the roster will be assigned to fill vacancies for Arabic-language translators as they occur in the language services in New York, Geneva, Vienna, Nairobi, Beirut and Addis Ababa. Assignments are subject to rotation and successful candidates may thereafter be called upon to serve at other duty stations in Africa, Asia or Europe or at Headquarters according to the needs of the Organization. Successful candidates are expected to serve **a minimum of five years** in language posts. The assignment of staff members of the United Nations who are successful in the examination and are selected to fill vacancies will be subject to the conditions set out in paragraphs 13 to 16 below.

* Expiration date of the present information circular: 31 December 2007.

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4. Staff members of the Secretariat applying for the examination must:

(a) Have Arabic as their main language;[1]

(b) Have a perfect command of Arabic and an excellent knowledge of English and one of the other official languages of the United Nations (Chinese, French, Russian or Spanish). The Board of Examiners, appointed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, requires that candidates' claims to knowledge of official languages be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files. Staff members who have been enrolled in a United Nations language course in any of the languages claimed must have passed the United Nations language proficiency examination in that language. Candidates who have not attended the United Nations language courses in the languages claimed must substantiate their claims to knowledge of those languages. For this purpose, staff members should attach to their application either a photocopy of a diploma or a certificate from a language school or a brief explanation of how they acquired their knowledge of the languages claimed. Staff members are advised to submit photocopies, not originals, of such documentation;

(c) Hold a degree or an equivalent qualification from a university or institution of equivalent status or hold a university degree from a recognized school of translation. Proof of degree and qualifications must be attached to the application;

(d) As an exception, for staff members who hold a university degree in the fields of law, science or technology, the requirement of an additional official language may be waived by the Board of Examiners. In such cases, the candidate will be required to select the specialized text of a legal, scientific or technical nature in part (b) of the examination during the time provided for the translation of the additional language paper (see para. 9 (b) below). In addition to that specialized text, the candidate will be required to translate another specialized text from English in part (c) of the examination (see para. 9 (c) below).

5. In addition, candidates are expected to have computer and word-processing skills.

6. In order to meet the Organization's need to recruit staff for language posts who will serve for a reasonable period of time before reaching retirement age, staff members who do not serve on 100-series appointments and who are over the age of 56 by the deadline for the submission of applications, 6 August 2007, will not be eligible to sit for the examination. There is no age limit for full-time staff members serving on 100-series appointments.

7. The requirement of a degree or its equivalent from a university or institution of equivalent status mentioned in paragraph 4 (c) may be waived for staff members who, in the judgement of the Board of Examiners, have adequate post-secondary educational qualifications from a university or institution of equivalent status and adequate secondary educational qualifications from an establishment at which the principal language of instruction is Arabic, in addition to five years of continuous service with the United Nations Secretariat by 31 December 1989.

[1] "Main language" should be understood to be the language in which the candidate is best able to work. Candidates' claims to Arabic as their main language must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files.

8. All applicants should submit with their applications a one-page essay in Arabic, explaining why they wish to work as a translator for the United Nations. All applications will be reviewed by the Board of Examiners. In instances where a large number of applications are received, the Board reserves the right to admit to the examination only the most qualified candidates based on a review of qualifications over and above the minimum criteria set out in paragraph 4. All applicants will be notified of the Board's decision in respect of their application. **The Board's decisions are final**.

9. The written examination, to be held, tentatively, on 12 November 2007, will consist of three papers:

(a) Translation into Arabic of a general text in English (two hours). It should be noted that this paper is eliminatory. Only candidates who are successful in this paper will have their other papers marked;

(b) Translation into Arabic of a text chosen by the candidate from a total of four texts, one in each of the other official languages of the United Nations (Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish) or, alternatively, translation of a specialized legal, scientific or technical text from English for candidates with a relevant degree (one and a half hours);

(c) Translation into Arabic of one specialized text in English (economic, social, legal, scientific or technical) (one and a half hours).

10. The use of a dictionary or any other reference material will **not** be permitted during the examination. Similarly, candidates may not use personal computers to prepare their papers.

11. On the basis of the results of the written examination, the Board of Examiners will invite selected candidates to an interview. The Board will interview each candidate to assess general knowledge, professional experience, knowledge of the United Nations and current events, adaptability to the prevailing working conditions of the United Nations Secretariat, readiness to serve at any duty station and ability to work as a member of a team. Candidates will be given some preparation time and be asked to translate orally a text from English into Arabic. The interview is an integral part of the examination. Therefore, candidates who are invited for an interview **should not** assume that they will automatically be offered an assignment.

12. On the basis of the overall results of the examination, the Board will recommend to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management the names of candidates who qualify for inclusion in the roster. All candidates admitted to the examination will be informed in writing of the Board's final recommendation in respect of their candidature. The Board's recommendations are **not** subject to appeal. The Board **does not** release individual scores or results. When vacancies occur, successful candidates will be recruited from the roster subject to the requirements of the service in terms of expertise and language combinations. Successful candidates who receive an offer of appointment are strongly encouraged to accept it, as declining may affect their prospects of receiving a subsequent offer.

13. Staff members selected to fill vacancies will be assigned as Arabic-language translators for a probationary period of two years. Staff members below the P-2 level or who are in the General Service category will receive a special post allowance to the P-2 level. Staff members at the P-2 and P-3 levels will be assigned

at their respective levels. Successful candidates are expected to be able to use a computer workstation.

14. Successful candidates assigned directly to duty stations away from Headquarters will normally be required to spend the first six months of their trial period in the corresponding service at Headquarters.

15. Staff members with a special post allowance to the P-2 level and those already at the P-2 level who complete the trial period successfully and are recommended by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Office of Human Resources Management may be promoted to the P-3 level. Staff members already at the P-3 level who complete the trial period successfully will be confirmed in their functions at the P-3 level. Staff members on fixed-term appointments will be eligible to be considered for permanent appointment subject to the requirements of the staff rules in force. Staff members who do not complete the trial period successfully will be reassigned to posts at their previous levels and the special post allowance, if any, will be discontinued.

16. In accordance with the needs of the service, successful candidates may be called upon to work outside normal working hours, including weekends and holidays.

17. Staff members applying for the examination should complete the attached form and submit it, no later than 6 August 2007 to:

2007 competitive examination for Arabic-language translators
Examinations and Tests Section
Division for Organizational Development
Office of Human Resources Management
Room S-2575-E
United Nations Secretariat
New York, NY 10017
Fax No.: 1-212 963-3683
E-mail: OHRM_exam@un.org

Applications received after the above deadline and incomplete applications (without supporting documentation for degree and knowledge of languages or without the essay) will not be considered.

18. In order to ensure receipt of all applications submitted by staff members from offices away from Headquarters, those staff members are requested to return their applications to the Division for Organizational Development of the Office of Human Resources Management through the Chief Administrative Officer or Director of the United Nations Information Centre of their respective duty stations by 6 August 2007, the deadline for receipt of applications in the Division for Organizational Development.

Application for staff members only

2007 competitive examination for Arabic-language translators

Index No. ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Last name ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Category ☐☐ Level ☐☐

First name ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Male ☐ Female ☐

Date of entry on duty Month ☐☐ Year ☐☐☐☐

Type of contract _____ Expiration date _____

Department/office _____ Duty station _____

Room No. _____ Tel. extension _____ Fax extension _____ E-mail _____

Have you taken this examination before? Yes ☐ Year ☐☐☐☐ No ☐

Have you taken another United Nations competitive examination? Yes ☐ Year ☐☐☐☐ No ☐

If yes, which examination(s) _____

What is your main language?[2] ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Will you take the specialized technical paper? (Instead of the requirement for an additional official language) Yes / No _____

Please attach an up to date P.11 form, or preferably a PHP form, to this application. Describe your work experience giving dates and length of time and provide information on your computer and word-processing skills.

Please attach also an academic transcript or a proof of your degree, proof of knowledge of languages and an essay explaining why you wish to take the examination.

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

[2] "Main language" should be understood to be the language in which the candidate is best able to work. Candidates' claims to Arabic as their main language must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files.

I certify that the information I have provided above is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date _____ **Signature** _____

I have read information circular ST/IC/2007/21 and I understand that, if I am successful in the 2007 competitive examination for Arabic-language translators and recommended for inclusion in the roster, my assignment as an Arabic-language translator will be subject to my acceptance of the conditions of service indicated in paragraphs 13 to 16.

Date _____ **Signature** _____